/Turkey...

18 November 1980

Mr Thomas Hammarberg,
Secretary General,
Amnesty International,
10 Southampton Street,
London WC2E 7HF

Dear Mr Hammarberg,

Thank you for your letter of 29 October about Dr. Necmettin Erbakan. I have not replied earlier due to my absence on a visit abroad.

I am more than a little concerned that you imply that you are not satisfied that Dr. Erbakan and his colleagues were arrested for no other reason than advocating their beliefs. I can assure you that our knowledge and information makes this very clear.

This state of affairs is of course completely unacceptable in any democratic society and the world looks to an organisation of your influence and standing to support actively victims of such injustices.

The Secretary General of the International Commission of Jurists, Mr Niall MacDermot, to whom I wrote concerning this matter, replied: "We share your concern about the arrest and detention of the leaders of the National Salvation Party, and of other leaders who have not been involved in the acts of violence which precipitated the recent coup. We have written to the Turkish Government to express this concern and to request their early release."

I hope that you will also feel able to take positive steps on their behalf. The matter is of course urgent, since the days and weeks pass and, despite many representations by various organisations, including ourselves, there is no sign from the Turkish Government of their either releasing those concerned or of their agreeing that they be given a fair and open trial.

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I, therefore, request that your Department takes all such steps that may be necessary for the release of Dr. Erbakan, his political colleagues and all others in a similar position, and for putting an end to the persecution and harassment of people for their political affiliations and beliefs.

In case efforts to secure the release of Dr. Erbakan and his colleagues do not succeed and the government decides to go ahead with the trials, you might like to send an observer to report on the fairness of the proceedings.

May I add that your firm and clear stand on this matter will go a long way in strengthening the cause of human rights and will be highly appreciated throughout the world.

Finally, I should be most grateful if you would kindly keep me posted as to actions taken and your views on the matter.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,

Salem Azzam
Secretary General

A letter has also been sent to:

The Assistant Secretary for Humanitarian Affairs,
Department of State,
Washington

(24 November 1980)

and to:

Dr Kurt Waldheim,
Secretary General,
U.N. Commission on Human Rights,
New York

(25 November 1980)

International Federation for the Rights of Man,
Paris

The International League for Human Rights,
New York

The International Association of Democratic Lawyers,
Brussels

The European Commission of Human Rights,
Council of Europe,
Strasbourg

(The last four also on 25 November 1980)